

THE HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE IN THE MACROSTRUCTURE OF HUNGARIAN CULTURE

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Édes anyanyelvünk! (Our sweet mother tongue!) These lofty words radiating a great amount of emotive information, and therefore — having a “high cost” (see details in: Rot 1977) were born among the broad masses of the Hungarian people who firmly decided to preserve through millennia of their stormy history interwoven with uneven fights and bloodthirsty wars, against fierce enemies, with terrible yokes and deprivation the most precious heritage of their ancestors — their mother tongue.

And this passionate fight for language survival which contributed at large to “the linguistic miracle of Hungarian” (Rot 1986) reflected under-consciously the wisdom of the broad masses of population that “a people live in their native tongue”.

In its “drift” down time and space (Sapir 1949, 150) the Hungarian language, due to the dynamic trajectory of the action of its “intralinguistic” and “extralinguistic” actuation riddles (or motive forces) (Rot 1986a) has always fulfilled its main role of the most important tools of communication and a means of expressing feeling and has achieved its present-day richness, and prestige.

The macrosystem of Present-Day Hungarian which comprises its standards (termed “irodalmi nyelv”), its regional varieties, i.e. the vernaculars used by the Hungarian minorities in Rumania (mainly Transylvania), Czecho and Slovakia, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union (primarily in Subcarpathia or Transcarpathia or the Carpathian Ukraine), Austria (mainly the Burgenland) (see: Rot 1988, 821–831), their written and spoken manifestations, beginning with let us say the works by Gyula Illyés, and ending with a lecture of Lajos Lőrincze “Édes anyanyelvünk” broadcasted by the “Rádió Kossuth”, and non-standard, including colloquial Hungarian (called “köznyelv”), its regional (or territorial dialects) termed “nyelvjárások” and “tájszólások” (Imre 1971) and sociolects (including slang [named jassznyelv]), professional jargons, etc. is part and parcel of the macrostructure of contemporary Hungarian culture.

What place does the macrosystem of Present-Day Hungarian in the macrostructure of the contemporary Hungarian culture occupy?

Before embarking on a detailed analysis of this rather complicated problem it is necessary to clear up some crucial points concerning the “plane of

content" (Hjlemslev) of the Hung. term "*kultúra*" 'culture' (recorded in 1790; TESz. II. 666).

Areal complex etymologizing has given evidence that the genetic source of borrowing of the Hung. term "*kultúra*" goes back to MLat. *culturare* 'tilage of soil' (cf. Lat. *colere* 'to take care: cultivate'). Its primary historical source of taking over being the Fr. *culture* respectively *culturel* 'cultural' (cf. MoHG *kulturell*, E. *cultural*, It. *culturale*, Pol. *kulturalny*, etc.), and his historical source of borrowing the MoHG (*die*) *Kultur* 'tilage of soil, rearing of production (of bees, oysters, fish, silk, etc.)'; (see: also Bulg. *kultura*, Czech *kultura*, Serbo-Cr. *kultura*, Rum. *cultura*, Slk. *kultura*, Dan. *kultur*, Swed. *kultur*, (a lexico-semantic internationalism).

In Hungarian itself "the derivative structure of the monosemes" (Rot 1987, 18-9), i. e. the notion of this lexical unit has during centuries developed the E. lexical unit culture possesses [it includes some monosemes the E. terms civilization and education display]; *kultúraátvétel* 'acculturation'; *kultúraellenes* 'opposed/injurious to culture/civilization'; *kultúrálatlan* 'uncultured, uncivilized, uneducated, barbarous, savage, unpolished, low-brow'; *kultúráltság* 'civilization, culture, refinement'; *kultúrbetegség* 'civilization disease, disease of civilization'; *kulturegyezmény* 'agreement concerning cultural relations; cultural pact'; *kulturélet* 'cultural life'; *kultúrérték* 'cultural value'; *kultúrforradalom* 'cultural revolution'; *kulturfront* 'cultural front'; *kultúrigény* 'cultural demands (Pl.)'; *kultúrkapcsolatok* (Pl.) 'cultural relations'; *kultúrmisszió* 'cultural mission'; *kultúrpolitika* 'policy of (national) education'; *kultúrszomj* 'yearning/thirst of education', and many others [See: MÉrtSz. IV, 497-501; OMASZ, 1185-1186]].

The special literature devoted to problems of culture, including Hungarian culture is full of controversy. We have come across more than thirty-five different definitions what culture is beginning with the statement that it is "the best which has been said and thought in the world" (M. Arnold) and ending with the definition that it is "all that men and woman have made of their world — their politics, their economics, their families, their work, their gestures and movements, their machnies, their art and artifacts... evething" (Sklar, 1976, 5-6). An insightful look into the problems of 'culture' was given by A. Sarbu (1986). A possible "common core" in this diveristy has been found by D. Lee, for whom "culture is a symbolic system which transforms the physical reality, what is there, into experienced reality" (quoted in Rozsnyai 1986, 188).

In our opinion Hungarian culture is rather complicated dynamic socio-historical macrostructure which fixes and objectivizes the social conscious of the epoch.

In the macrostructure of contemporary Hungarian culture some slight relics of the ancient "ergative" type of Uralic culture with its linear causality in reflecting the reality, its linguistic taboos, the spoors of the cult of the bear and shamanism in folklore; features of the "nominative" type of culture; and the domination of the "analytic" type of culture characteristic in European cultures (details about these types of culture see in: Rot 1982, 149-174). The "dominant" of contemporary Hungarian culture is the language. This idea was brilliantly understood and suggested by the great poet Mihály Vörösmarty (1821-1907) who exclaimed "a nemzet a nyelvében él" 'the nation lives in its language'.

Developing the ideas of M. A. K. Halliday (1970) and ruling out his modern semantic positivism we have made an attempt to explain the notion of contemporary Hungarian culture in semiotic terms and to see what the relation of Present-Day Hungarian to the non-language parts of the macrostructure of contemporary Hungarian culture is.

Within the framework of semiotics of culture J. Odmark studied the problems of the interaction of American English and American culture (Odmark 1981). He came to the conclusion that this interaction constitutes much more than "just the expansion and modification of the vocabulary: language informs the structure of the culture of which it is part as the system of constraints and prescriptions governing social interaction influence the nature of language change" (Odmark 1981, 39).

But to what extent is this assumption in fact true, in what sense is it a valid observation which could be applied in revealing the essence of the interaction of the macrosystem of Present-Day Hungarian and the macrostructure of contemporary Hungarian? Our investigations have shown that this keen observation of J. Odmark is in general conclusive for the study of the interrelation between the macrosystem of Present-Day Hungarian and the macrostructure of contemporary Hungarian too.

However, it should be expanded by the conclusions made by J. Lotman and B. Uspensky who maintain that the structures and sub-structures of signification in culture are language based, that is, they have secondary modelling function which derives from the rules governing language. They made it plain that "against the background of non-culture, culture appears as a system of signs" (Lotman and Uspensky 1978, 211), which includes the macrosystem of language as its "dominant".

Thus the organization of Present-Day Hungarian determines the organization of the non-language parts of the macrostructure of contemporary Hungarian culture as a whole. In some instances, there is no perceptible internal organization in the non-language parts of the macrostructure of

contemporary Hungarian culture. The modelling function of the Present-Day Hungarian language only becomes apparent when viewed within the context of the semiotic system (See the works of Ch. Peirce, W. James, Ch. Morris, Th. Seboek, Th. Vinner, V. Voigt on problems of semiotics).

J. Lotman and B. Uspensky suggest that the relations among structures of culture be considered as a set of cocentric circles, with natural language located at the centre and the system lacking any internal organization on the periphery (Lotman and Uspensky 1978, 213). The dependence of the structure of non-language parts of the macrostructure of culture on the structure of the language encourages an approach to the macrostructure of contemporary Hungarian culture through the macrosystem of Present-Day Hungarian. However, if we turn theory to concrete analysis, certain difficulties become readily apparent. Before looking more closely at the limitations of an approach to the macrostructure of contemporary Hungarian culture through Present-Day Hungarian, we would like to briefly outline some of the ways in which non-language parts of the macrostructure of culture and language interact.

Our investigations have shown that the reciprocal relationship between language and non-language parts of the macrostructure of contemporary Hungarian culture is being manifested by the fact that on the one hand, the rules of the whole macrostructure of culture derive from those governing the macrosystem of Present-Day Hungarian. On the other hand, the non-language parts of the macrostructure of contemporary Hungarian culture affect changes in Present-Day Hungarian, not only on the level of lexis, e. g., H.: *GMK* (*gazdasági munkaközösség*) 'small private enterprise'; *lizing* 'leasing (an instrument conveying property to another for definite period, or at will, usually in consideration of rent or other periodical compensation)'; *popének* 'popsinger'; *alternatív kerekasztal tömörülés* 'the round table group of parties and organizations which were in opposition to the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party'; and many other neologisms where its influence is most obvious but also on other levels of the language, including the syntactical, word-formational and even morphological ones.

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